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Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP75B00380R000700050005-9

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RNR 108

VETO

WASHINGTON, AUG 22, REUTER--THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TODAY VOTED TO GIVE CONGRESS A VETO OVER FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS ON THE DIAGO GARCIA BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

THE PANEL TOOK THE ACTION AS IT ALSO CUT THE FUNDS REQUESTED BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO IMPROVE AIRCRAFT AND NAVAL FACILITIES ON THE STRATEGICALLY LOCATED BRITISH-OWNED ISLAND. THE COMMITTEE APPROVED 18 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE WORK. THE PENTAGON HAD SOUGHT 33 MILLION DOLLARS.

BUT THE COMMITTEE MADE SPENDING OF THE MONEY CONDITIONAL UPON PRESIDENT FORD SUBMITTING TO CONGRESS A STATEMENT DECLARING THAT ALL THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE BASE HAD BEEN EVALUATED.

FINAL APPROVAL OF THE FUNDS WOULD THEN BE CONTINGENT UPON PASSAGE OF A JOINT RESOLUTION BY BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS. THUS EITHER THE SENATE OR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COULD BLOCK APPROVAL.

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THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE ACTION CAME IN APPROVING A MILITARY CONSTRUCTION BILL FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR/ THE LEGISLATION STILL MUST BE APPROVED BY THE FULL SENATE WHICH IS NOT EXPECTED TO ACT UNTIL MID-SEPTEMBER.

SENATE SOURCES SAID THE FULL SENATE IS LIKELY TO GO ALONG WITH THE DIEGO GARCIA PROVISIONS WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE APPROVED IN A STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET BILL. BUT BOTH BILLS WILL HAVE TO GO TO A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TO WORK OUT FINAL VERSIONS.

Comment:

THE HOUSE ALREADY HAS APPROVED FUNDS FOR DIEGO GARCIA IN ITS VERSION OF THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION BILL.

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